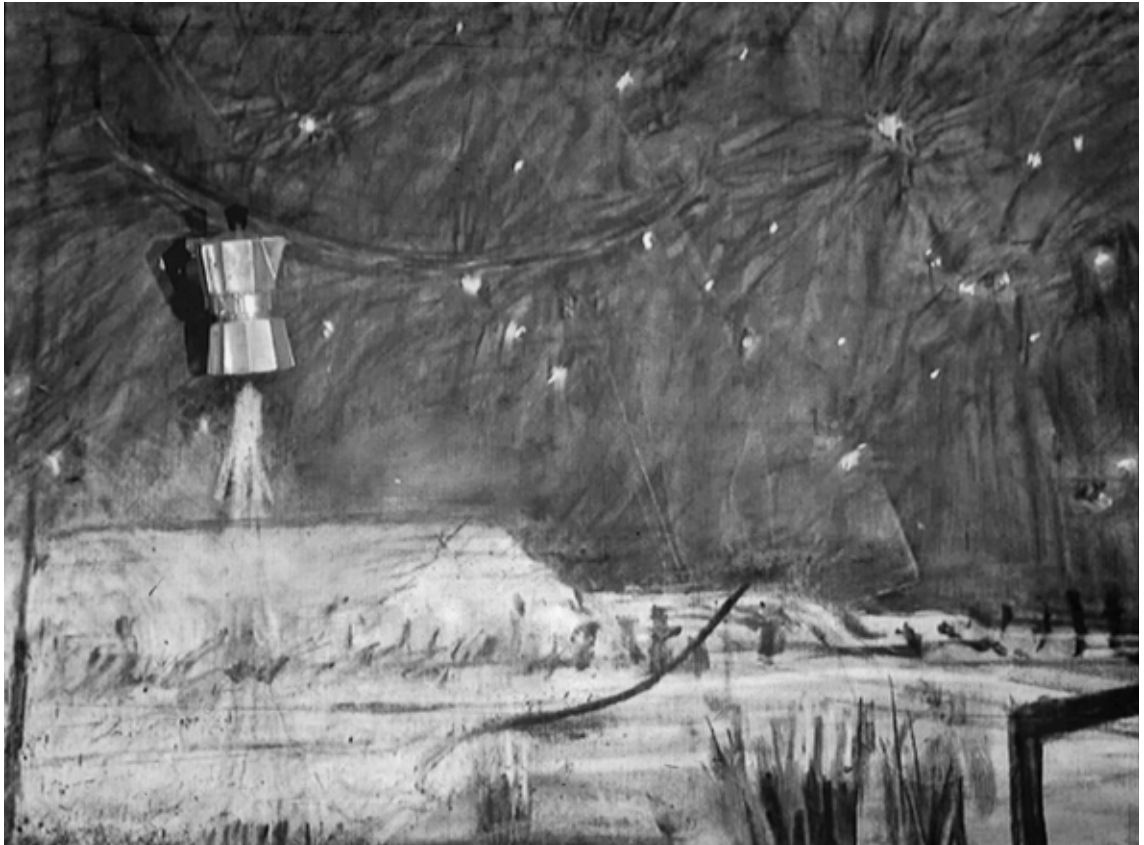


GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Press release



The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents on March 12, 2020

William Kentridge: 7 Fragments

William Kentridge: 7 Fragments

- Dates: March, 12–February 7, 2021
- Curator: Manuel Cirauqui
- Film & Video gallery (103)

From March 12 to June 14, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents *William Kentridge: 7 Fragments*, the first exhibition of the 2020 programming season of the Film & Video gallery, a space devoted to presenting seminal works of video art and video installation and exploring the moving image as a key artistic language of our time.

The exhibition features three works by acclaimed artist William Kentridge (b. 1955, Johannesburg) with more than four decades of work in film and video art. In this nine-screen presentation, Kentridge invokes French filmmaker Georges Méliès, a founding genius and pioneer of cinema, simultaneously creating a dreamlike self-portrait and a representation of the studio as a microcosm. Kentridge's black-and-white film installation mixes live-action footage with his signature stop-motion drawing technique, in which he makes a large charcoal drawing, exposes it to the camera, then erases and redraws certain areas. As the process repeats, each image in the resulting animation is suffused with the smudges of the earlier frames, prompting a powerful reflection on the making and disappearance of images as indissolubly tied moments.

In *7 Fragments for Georges Méliès* (2003), the video work that lends its title to this exhibition, Kentridge appears to be at work in his studio or interacting with one of his animated drawings, crafting a dreamlike self-portrait in which the studio functions as a cosmic stage for contemplating the artist's daily preoccupations.

Day for Night (2003) references Méliès's experiments with inverting black-and-white film negatives. Here, Kentridge films an invasion of ants in his apartment, crawling across a sugar trail he has laid for them. He then prints the film in negative, creating the effect of a starry nighttime galaxy.

The third work presented, *Journey to the Moon* (2003)—an homage to Méliès's 1902 masterpiece of the same title—features an original soundtrack by composer Philip Miller. Here, Kentridge meanders around his studio on a quest to materialize his own creative vision. He also uses reverse photography to create the dreamlike visual effect of sheets of drawings flying magically into his hands from the floor. In these three connected works, Kentridge acknowledges the influence of Méliès and his inventive experiments with illusionistic effects. Working at the dawn of cinema in the early 20th century, Méliès pioneered techniques, such as reverse motion, animation, cuts, and dissolves, that allowed him to create magical films unlike any that had ever been seen before.

This exhibition is the result of a collaboration between the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and Fundació Sorigué.

William Kentridge. Biography

A leading figure in the recent history of film and video installation, William Kentridge was born in 1955 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The city, where he still lives and works, would become a referential context—geographic, political, and social—for many of his signature pieces. As the son of two anti-apartheid lawyers, he was an activist in his youth and has remained committed to making art that reflects the complex challenges of living in South Africa during and since apartheid. His work explores human life in all its density, on the practical and ethical levels, which includes art as a form of politically sensitive living. At once private and universal, tragic and playful, the work is steeped in philosophical questions that are central to our time.

Kentridge is internationally renowned for his distinctive animated short films that intersect choreography and drawing, inscription and erasure, physical gesture and cinematic technology. The predominance of black and white in Kentridge's work links the traditional texture of cinematic film to the plastic media of charcoal, graphite, ink, and their corrective allies—washcloth, eraser, and water—and explores the emotional pairing of a gesture and its erasure. His long and multifaceted artistic career reflects the importance of the creative process.

Since the late 1990s Kentridge has shown his work at major museums and institutions around the world, as well as opera theaters, concert halls, and other significant public spaces, such as the banks of the Tiber River in Rome. He has received numerous awards, including the Kyoto Premium, Japan, 2010; the Dan David Prize, Israel, 2012; and the Princesa de Asturias Award, 2017. He is a member of the American Academy of the Arts and Letters; in 2013, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts by Yale University, and in 2014 he received an Honorary Doctorate in Literature from the University of Cape Town.

Film & Video (Gallery 103)

The Film & Video gallery features a program of exhibitions exclusively devoted to contemporary practices of the moving image, video art, and film-based media installation. Since it opened in 2016, this space has presented work by unique artists such as Christian Marclay, Ragnar Kjartansson, Fiona Tan, Ken Jacobs, Amie Siegel, Pierre Huyghe, Michael Snow, Javier Téllez, Diana Thater, Allora & Calzadilla, Jesper Just, and Jesse Jones. The program of the gallery begins in 2020 with this quintessential artist of film and video.

Cover image:

William Kentridge

Journey to the Moon, 2003

Video, black and white with audio; 7 min. 10 sec.

Collection Fundació Sorigué, Lleida

© William Kentridge, 2003

Courtesy Lia Rumma Gallery Milan/Naples

For more information:

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Marketing and Communications Department

Tel: +34 944 359 008

media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus

www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus

All information about the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is available at www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus (press room).

Press Images for
William Kentridge: 7 Fragments
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Online Photo Service for Press Images

At the press area (prensa.guggenheim-bilbao.es/en) you can register and download high resolution images and videos featuring the exhibitions and the building. Sign in to get access. If you are already a user, log in here (you need your username and password).

For further information, please contact the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Press Department: tel. +34 944 359 008 and email: media@guggenheim-bilbao.eus

William Kentridge

7 Fragments for Georges Méliès and Day for Night, 2003

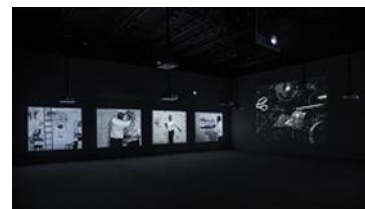
Eight-channel HD video installation. Black and white, silent.

Collection Fundació Sorigué, Lleida

© William Kentridge, 2003

Installation view: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, 2020

Photo: Sergio Verde



William Kentridge

Journey to the Moon, 2003

Video, black and white with audio; 7 min. 10 sec.

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